

Contents

A Complete Sacramental Preparation	G4	4 Examination of Conscience	G16
Scope and Sequence	G5	Adult Background	
A Family and Parish-Based Preparation	G6	Preparation Hints	
Components	G8	Plan for the Session	
A Preparation Rite	G9	5 Celebrating Reconciliation	G18
1 Following Jesus	G10	Adult Background	
Adult Background		Preparation Hints	
Preparation Hints		Plan for the Session	
Plan for the Session		6 Living as Peacemakers	G20
2 Following God's Law	G12	Adult Background	
Adult Background		Preparation Hints	
Preparation Hints		Plan for the Session	
Plan for the Session		A Peacemaking Rite	G22
3 Being Sorry, Being Forgiven	G14	Suggestions for Families	G23
Adult Background			
Preparation Hints			
Plan for the Session			

2 Following God's Law

Adult Background

The person who chooses to act immorally reveals that he or she is temporarily "stone deaf." When we look at the Latin roots of the word "obedience," we are reminded that it means "to hear." We show that we have heard God's commands by responding to them with loving and active compliance. Hearing, then, leads to the happiness of living in harmony with God's will.

By revealing the Ten Commandments to Moses on Mount Sinai, God clearly marked out a path of life. Those who remain on the path walk in freedom. The snares of sin (idolatry, disrespect for God or others, anger, infidelity, greed) cannot entangle them. When a rich young man asked Jesus how to gain eternal life, the Teacher responded, "If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments" (Matthew 19:17).

Jesus came to fulfill the spirit of the Law. For Him, all the commandments are summed up as follows: "You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. You shall love

your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:37, 39).

Happy are we when our ears are open to these commands. And happy are those children with whom we share the true meaning of obedience.

Preparation Hints

In this session the commandments are taught as positive rules that guide us in making right choices. Familiarize the children with specific ways of carrying out these commandments in their own lives. Explain to them that God's laws are for our well-being and happiness—not just as individuals but as a whole community. Therefore, when God's laws are broken, all of us are hurt. While encouraging them to make right decisions, be sure the children understand that God never stops loving them, even when they have made bad choices.

Special-Needs Child

Treat mainstreamed children the same as other children. Expect the same standards of behavior.

Visual Needs

❖ preferential seating; closing activity in large type

Auditory Needs

❖ tape of Scripture story; headphones

Tactile-Motor Needs

❖ peer helper for cutout activity

Resources

God's Rules for Me (video)
St. Paul Books and Media
50 St. Paul's Avenue
Boston, MA 02130
(1-800-876-4463)

Materials for This Session

❖ Sadlier's Songs: *First Reconciliation*
cassette or CD

Plan for the Session

Beginning ___ min.

- ❖ Make the sign of the cross prayerfully with the children.
- ❖ Ask the children to decide if the following “laws” are helpful or not:
 - Play on the railroad tracks.
 - Do not go to bed before midnight.
 - Look both ways before crossing the street.

Go over these “laws,” with the children. Then invite responses to the opening three questions on page 14. Read together the six imaginary situations and share reactions. As a group, discuss the activity on page 15. Have the children share various rules that could appear on the signs. List these rules. Then have each child choose a rule from the list and write it under the appropriate picture.

Read the paragraph about God’s laws. Emphasize that God’s laws are given to us for our safety and happiness. Invite the children to pray the prayer together.

Middle ___ min.

- ❖ Ask the questions at the beginning of page 16 and allow time for the children to respond. Invite the children to look at the picture on page 17 as they listen to the Scripture story. Ask them why they think the law to love God and others is the greatest law of all.

Have the children then read the Law of Love several times to help them learn it by heart.

- ❖ Introduce the Ten Commandments by reading the first two paragraphs on page 18. Emphasize that these commandments are the laws God gave His people to help them love God and one another.

Introduce the word *sin* by reading the rest of the page. Review the children’s understanding of the material by asking: “Does God stop loving us when we sin? When does God forgive us?”

- ❖ Go over the paraphrasing of the Ten Commandments on page 19. The commandments are expressed here in simple language to help the children understand how they affect their lives. If time allows, ask the children to provide examples of how we can keep each commandment. (The pictures illustrate some examples.)

- ❖ Introduce the children to the song “God Has Made Us a Family” on page 77. You might wish to use it at the group’s First Reconciliation celebration.

End ___ min.

- ❖ Ask the children to recall as many commandments as they can. Have them look at page 19 for help. Then read the commandments together. Go over the directions for the activity on page 20. Do the first sentence as a group and have the children explain their choices. Allow time for the children to complete the activity. Then, when all have finished, invite volunteers to share their responses. You might want to make this a group activity. Have the children make a face mask out of a paper plate. Have them show the happy or sad side as their response.
- ❖ Invite the children to bring their books to the prayer circle. Prepare in advance the children who will read each commandment. Encourage the group to respond reverently in prayer.
- ❖ Have the children take home their books to share page 21 and the *Preparing for Reconciliation* booklet 2. Encourage them to work on the *At Home* activity and booklet with their families.